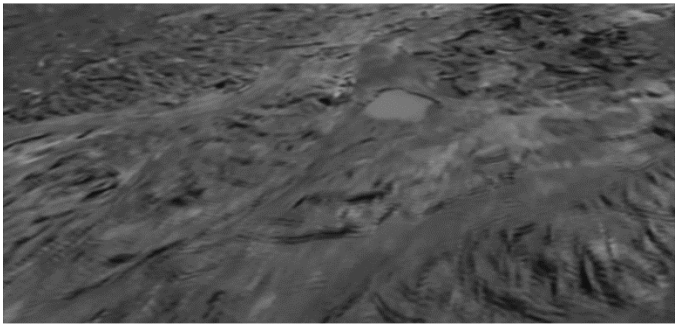
# A Brief History of Geotrauma

*Robin Mackay*



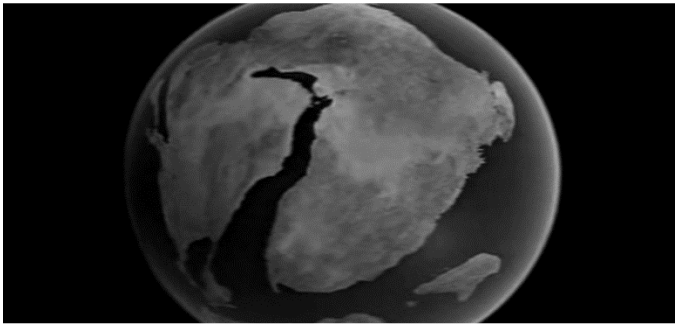
*Freud, Ferenczi, Lovecraft, Bodkin, Challenger, Cane, Barker, Land, Parsani. Unilkely characters. Crackpots, every one of them. Frauds, fakes, pseudoscientists at best. Indisciplined thinkers breeding speculative mon-*

*grels. Hysteria, neuronics, stratoanalysis, schizoanalysis, geotraumatics.*

*Through misinterpretations, imaginary convergences, forced couplings and other shady maneouvres lacking in the principled behaviour expected of a scholar, they claimed to have invented a new discipline referred to by various names at various times; but no-one clearly understood what the goals, methods or principles of this new discipline were.*

*And yet, there was something important here;*

*something on the verge of being forgotten. There would have been no trace,*

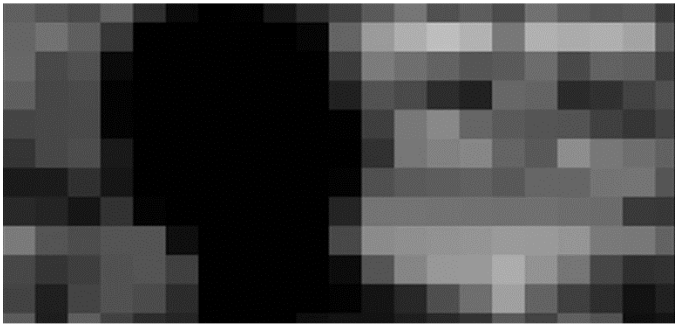


*the Geo-cosmic Theory of Trauma would not even have been a memory, if it weren't for the work of the Plutonics Committee.*

*Not that it was easy. An indirect approach was necessary. A contemporary advocate, a new candidate. If he didn't exist, he would have to be invented. And this time, something had to get through.*

*The committee had its eye on the widest possible target market. So the primary task was an understanding of how ideas travel—an epidemiology of the concept.*

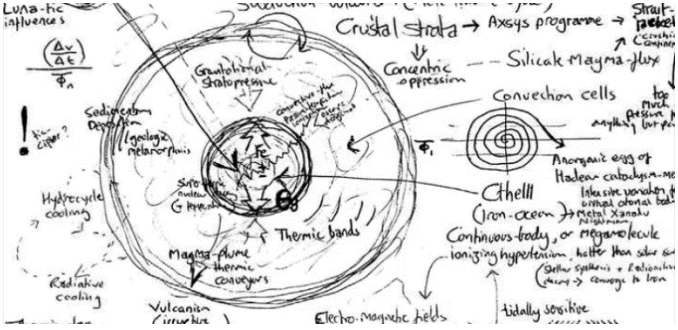
*It obviously couldn't be an academic. Things have changed: freaks like Land and Parsani wouldn't even get through the doors of a university these days. No, it would have to be an outsider—exotic, even.*



*Some peculiar maverick, self-taught, no qualifications; a lone voice who comes out of nowhere.*

*He—or she—must be credibly unreachable, hidden away. Somewhere on the Axis of Evil, maybe, to add some political intrigue: A persecuted dissident scouring the outer reaches of the web to find other sick-minded individuals, he comes across Land,*

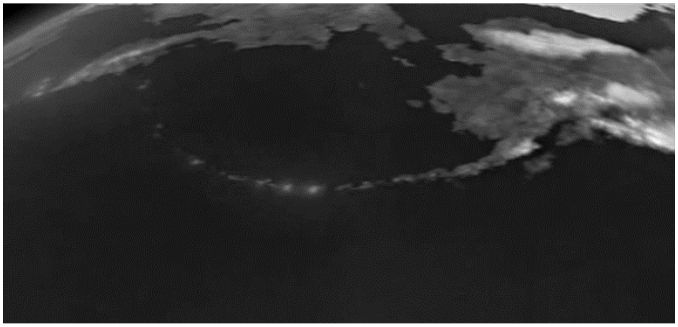
*retired from philosophy and now promulgating conspiracy theory and peddling neo-occultist speculations. Land passes on the last Barker manuscript to him.*



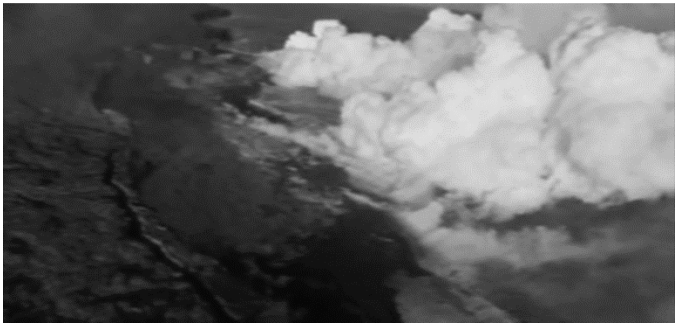

*Then he discovers Parsani's notebooks in Iran, realizes the Bodkin-Cane connection, and begins to piece it together. It* could *have happened that way.*

*Then move him to the Far East. Someplace no-one ever goes. Not even China or Japan—Malaysia. Construct his writings in a kind of tortured, gnomic style that combines extreme etymological acuity with a sick imagination that comes of watching too many horror movies.*

*Anyhow, he's probably sick in some way. Insomniac, delirious, unable to function normally; sick with some kind of middle-eastern fever. That* could *be the case.*



*Invisible, his character must exude a sort of enigmatic charisma, and an aura of exoticism. Since he comes from outside, almost anything would be credible. Keep him hidden for as long as possible, unseen but effective.*

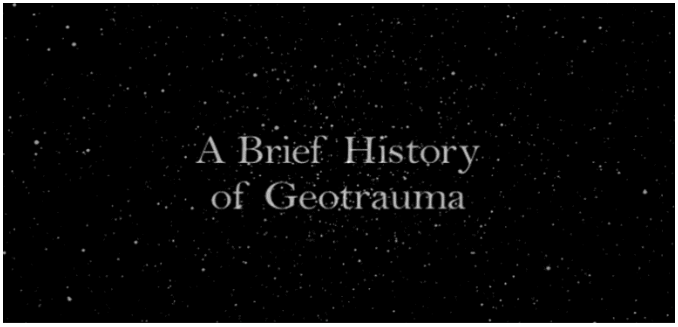


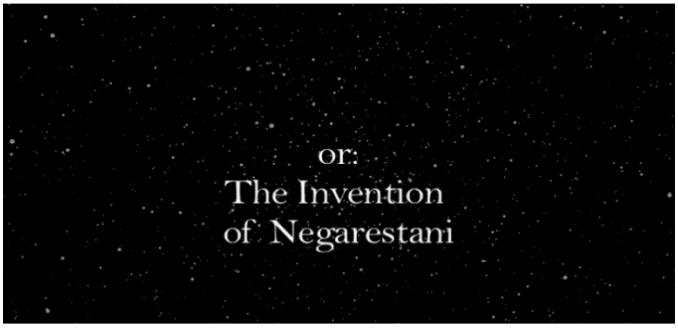
*Personal appearances made and cancelled. Visa problems, poor health, whatever it takes. If it gets to the stage where he does have to appear, it has to be done well—no expense spared.*

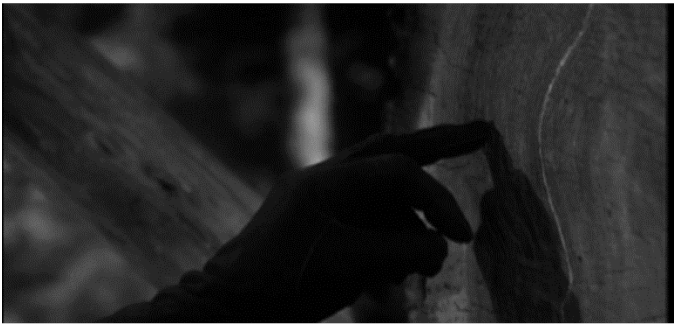
*But above all, the ideas keep coming, exerting a subterranean influence. All that is necessary is that he exist long enough to effectuate inception. Once the ideas take, once the ideas are embedded, he can easily be retired. Anything could happen to a freak like that.*

*It's true, the Committee took risks. Carried away with their creation, they ventured a few unnecessarily baroque twists. A fictional quantity expounding the theory of its own hyperstitional inexistence? A puppet who tells us what is pulling our strings?*

*In the end, no-one would be crazy enough to believe it wasn't true.*





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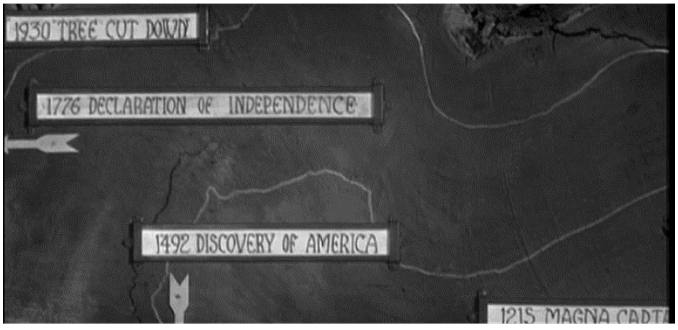
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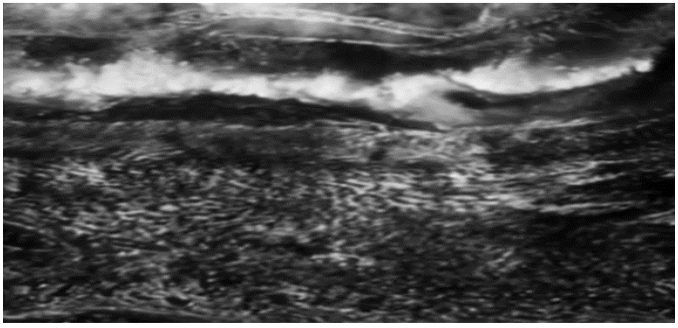

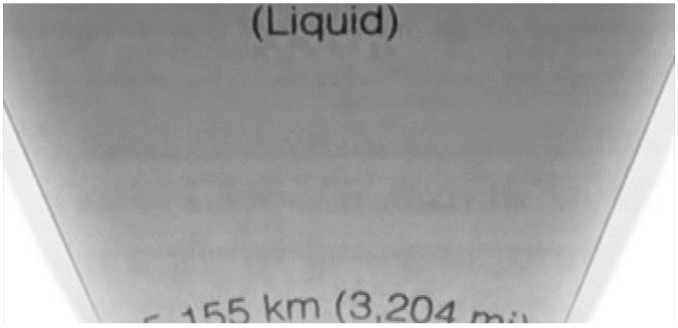
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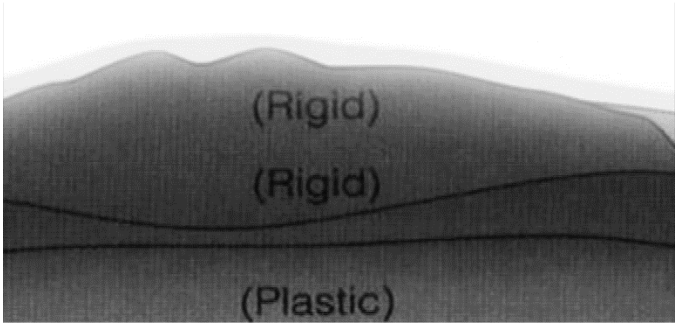
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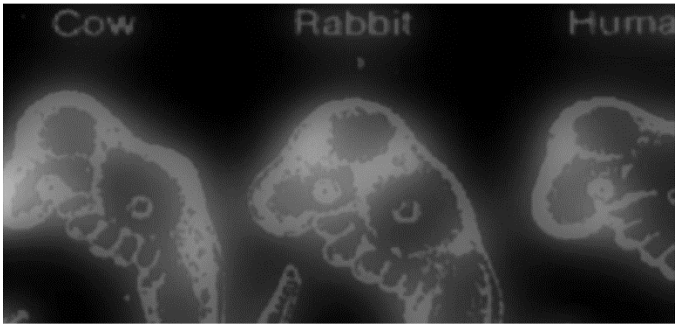
Cow
Rabbit
Huma

*

* *

Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish . . . The long stretches of waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of overshadowed distances . . . We were wanderers on prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet.

– *Tall trees.*

– *When were you born?*

– *So you're one of the dreamers now. You've beheld the fata morgana of the terminal lagoon. You look tired. Was it a deep one?*

Accessing files.

> The psychical material in such cases of hysteria presents itself as a structure in several dimensions which is stratified in at least three different ways. (*I hope I shall presently be able to justify this pictorial mode of expression.)*
>
> To begin with there is a nucleus consisting in memories of events or trains of thought in which the traumatic factor has culminated or the pathogenic idea has found its purest manifestation. Round this nucleus we find what is often an incredibly profuse amount of other mnemic material which has to be worked through in the analysis and which is, as we have said, arranged in a threefold order.
>
> In the first place there is an unmistakable linear chronological order which obtains within each separate theme. . . .
>
> [I]n Breuer's analysis of Anna O, . . . under each of . . . seven headings ten to over a hundred individual memories were collected in chronological series. It was as though we were examining a dossier that had been kept in good order.
>
> They make the work of analysis more difficult by the peculiarity that, in reproducing the memories, they reverse the order in

which these originated. The freshest and newest experience in the file appears first, as an outer cover, and last of all comes the experience with which the series in fact began.

Such groupings constitute 'themes'. These themes exhibit a second kind of arrangement. Each of them is—*I can not express it in any other way*—stratified concentrically round the pathogenic nucleus.

The contents of each particular stratum are characterized by an equal degree of resistance, and that degree increases in proportion as the strata are nearer to the nucleus. Thus there are zones within which there is all equal degree of modification of consciousness, and the different themes extend across these zones. The most peripheral strata contain the memories (or files), which, belonging to different themes, are easily remembered and have always been clearly conscious. The deeper we go the more difficult it becomes for the emerging memories to be recognized, till near the nucleus we come upon memories which the patient disavows even in reproducing them.

A third kind of arrangement has still to be mentioned—the most important, but the one about which it is least easy to make any general statement. What I have in mind is an arrangement according to thought-content, the linkage made by a logical thread which reaches as far as the nucleus and tends to take an irregular and twisting path, different in every case. This arrangement has a dynamic character, in contrast to the morphological one of the two stratifications mentioned previously. While these two would be represented in a spatial diagram by

a continuous line, curved or straight, the course of the logical chain would have to be indicated by a broken line which would pass along the most roundabout paths from the surface to the deepest layers and back, and yet would in general advance from the periphery to the central nucleus, touching at every intermediate halting-place—a line resembling the zig-zag line in the solution of a Knight's Move problem, which cuts across the squares in the diagram of the chessboard. . . .

We have said that this material behaves like a foreign body, and that the treatment, too, works like the removal of a foreign body from the living tissue. We are now in a position to see where this comparison fails. A foreign body does not enter into any relation with the layers of tissue that surround it, although it modifies them and necessitates a reactive inflammation in them. Our pathogenic psychical group, on the other hand, does not admit of being cleanly extirpated from the ego.

Its external strata pass over in every direction into portions of the normal ego; and, indeed, they belong to the latter just as much as to the pathogenic organization. In analysis the boundary between the two is fixed purely conventionally, now at one point, now at another, and in some places it cannot be laid down at all. The interior layers of the pathogenic organization are increasingly alien to the ego, but once more without there being any visible boundary at which the pathogenic material begins. In fact the pathogenic

> organization does not behave like a foreign body, but far more like an infiltrate.[1]

The theory of trauma was a crypto-geological hybrid from the very start. Darwin and the geologists had already established that the entire surface of the earth and everything that crawls upon it is a living fossil record, a memory bank rigorously laid down over unimaginable aeons and sealed against introspection; churned and reprocessed through its own material, but a horrifying read when the encryption is broken, its tales would unfold in parallel with Freud's, like two intertwining themes of humiliation.

Abandoning the circumspection with which Freud handles what he still supposes to be 'metaphorical' stratal imagery, Dr Daniel Barker's Cosmic Theory of Geotrauma, or Plutonics, flattens the theory of psychic trauma onto geophysics, with psychic experience becoming an encrypted geological report, the repercussion of a primal Hadean trauma in the material unconscious of Planet Earth. Further developing Professor Challenger's model of 'generalised stratification', Barker ultra-radicalises Nietzschean genealogy into a materialist cryptoscience.

> Who does the Earth think it is? It's a matter of consistency. Start with the scientific story, which goes like this: between four point five and four billion years ago—during the Hadean epoch—the earth was kept in a state of superheated molten slag, through the conversion of planetesimal and meteoritic

[1] Sigmund Freud, *The Psychotherapy of Hysteria* (1895), in vol. 2 of *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1953-1974).

impacts into temperature increase (kinetic to thermic energy).

As the solar system condensed, the rate and magnitude of collisions steadily declined, and the terrestrial surface cooled, due to the radiation of heat into space, reinforced by the beginnings of the hydrocycle. During the ensuing—Archaen—epoch the molten core was buried within a crustal shell, producing an insulated reservoir of primal exogeneous trauma, the geocosmic motor of terrestrial transmutation. And that's it. That's plutonics, or neoplutonism. It's all there: anorganic memory, plutonic looping of external collisions into interior content, impersonal trauma as drive-mechanism. The descent into the body of the earth corresponds to a regression through geocosmic time.

Trauma is a body. Ultimately—at its pole of maximum disequilibrium—it's an iron thing. At MVU they call it Cthelll: the interior third of terrestrial mass, semifluid metallic ocean, megamolecule, and pressure-cooker beyond imagination. It's hotter than the surface off the sun down there, three thousand clicks below the crust, and all that thermic energy is sheer impersonal nonsubjective memory of the outside, running the plate-tectonic machinery of the planet via the conductive and convective dynamics of silicate magma flux, bathing the whole system in electromagnetic fields as it tidally pulses to the orbit of the moon.

Cthelll is the terrestrial inner nightmare, nocturnal ocean, Xanadu: the anorganic metal-body trauma-howl of the earth, cross-hatched by intensities, traversed by thermic

> waves and currents, deranged particles, ionic strippings and gluttings, gravitational deep-sensitivities transduced into nonlocal electromesh, and feeding volcanism . . . that's why plutonic science slides continuously into schizophrenic delirium.[2]

Let's retell the story.

At the birth of the solar system, deviating from the protoplanetary disk that is to become the central body, a tiny, uniform spherical mass emerges from the solar nebula. Within 500 million years, a sudden sinking of matter into a dense metallic core—the 'Iron Catastrophe'—precipitates the formation of a differentiated, layered planetary structure, its molten inner matter surrounded by a thin rocky mantle and cold crust. This brittle surface seals into the depths the repressed secret of Earth's 'burning immanence with the sun'.

But the face of Earth does not remain still. The shifting visage of the planet results from the combination of external processes—climatic denudation and deposition—and internal processes—the movement of igneous or magmatic fluids. These two groups of processes transform the surface of the earth and shape the destiny of everything upon it. Their energy sources are, respectively, the sun, and its repressed runt sibling, the inner core of the earth. Thus, the thin crust destined to shield the inhabitants of Earth from its primal trauma, wears on its face the continually-shifting expression of the helio-plutonic bond.

Periodically, the pressure of magma in depth impels it to move in the direction of least resistance: repressed energy erupts onto the surface, forming ig-

[2] Daniel Charles Barker, "Barker Speaks," in Nick Land, *Fanged Noumena* (Falmouth/NY: Urbanomic/Sequence, 2011), 497-9.

neous intrusions through the crustal rocks. The terrestrial symptoms that crystallise around these periodic outbreaks of plutonic catharsis are far-reaching and ramified.

*Resident Alien*; The Insider. Trauma is at once a twisted plot, a geological complex, and a heavily-encrypted file-system. The archives come to the surface only to be churned and folded back into the detritus of their own repression. The tendrils of the 'pathogenic nucleus' merge imperceptibly with 'normal tissue'. And every living individual that ever existed is a playback copy, drawn from the recording vaults, trapped in a refrain that sings the glory of Cthelll.

Beyond the restricted biocentric model outlined in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* Barker's theory extends trauma to encompass the inorganic domain. The accretion of the earth is the aboriginal trauma whose scars are encrypted in/as terrestrial matter, instituting a register of unconscious pain coextensive with the domain of stratified materiality as such.

It is not known whether Barker was ever in direct contact with Dr. Bodkin, although the latter developed his work while serving on the covert research mission that preceded 'Project Scar'. In any case, among the features their theoretical works share is a reworking, through this radicalised Freudian theory of trauma, of the discredited biological notion that 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny'. If the biological is but a tortured incantation of Cthelll's seething inner core, genealogy, stratoanalysis and information theory promise a cryptography of this cosmic pain; and Haeckel's recapitulation thesis provides a suggestion for how an hysterico-biological filing-system might be formatted.

> Cryptography has been my guiding thread, right through. What is geotraumatics about,

> even now?—A rigorous practice of decoding.[3]

How would such a cryptography proceed? It's not as easy as opening files, unpacking cases. Freud knows the core can't be reached by so direct a route. The reverse-file-system, continually encrypted by its own access log, cannot be unpacked directly, but only through an experimental engagement with the twisted, rhizomatic plotlines that emerge from it . . .

> not only . . . a zig-zag, twisted line, but rather to a ramifying system of lines and more particularly to a converging one. It contains nodal points at which two or more threads meet and thereafter proceed as one; and as a rule several threads which run independently, or which are connected at various points by side-paths, debouch into the nucleus.[4]

Needless to say, trauma belongs to a time beyond personal memory—Evidently, Geotraumatics radicalizes Professor Challenger's insistence that schizoanalysis should extend further than the terrain of familial drama, to invest the social and political realms; pushing beyond history and biology, it incorporates the geological and the cosmological within the purview of a transcendental unconscious. The root source of the disturbance which the organism identifies according to its parochial frame of reference—mummy-daddy—or which it construes in terms of the threat of individual death, is a more profound trauma rooted in physical reality itself. Trauma is not personal, and the time of the earth is recorded, accreted, knotted up inside us. All human experience is an encrypted

[3] Barker, "Barker Speaks," 494.
[4] Freud, *Psychotherapy of Hysteria*.

message from Cthelll to the cosmos, the scream of the earth.

> Fast forward seismology and you hear the earth scream. Geotrauma is an ongoing process, whose tension is continually expressed—partially frozen—in biological organization.[5]

Nietzsche suggested that the structure and usage of the human body is the root source of the system of neurotic afflictions co-extensive with human existence; but this is also a *planetary* neurosis. Geotraumatic cryptography must proceed as ultra-genealogy, accessing these memories deep-frozen and imprinted in the body and determining the planetary events which they index.

*Vertigo*'s dramatization of hysteria may seem to linearise Freud's topologically-twisted model, suggesting that the core may be reached, repetition escaped, through linear regression, through an accessing of personal memory, a peeling back of layers. Perhaps it is only the exigencies of visual entertainment that take it off the couch, outside the therapist's office; but it intuits the kinship of the system of hysteria with non-human systems of memory; and (very possibly Hitchcock was reading Bodkin as well as Freud) it sees traumatic regression activated not through introspection but through return to a former environment, with the unconscious tacked onto geography in the form of affect-triggers. *Tall trees*.

Hence we return to Haeckel's recapitulation thesis. In his formulation of 'neuronics', Bodkin sought to understand the unconscious as a time-coded spinal memory, a series of evolutionary chemical-response triggers sensitive to climatic conditions. Neuronics

[5] Barker, "Barker Speaks," 499.

sets out to empirically map the relation between psychic organization, biological phylogenesis, and environmental stimuli. Bodkin's disconcertingly prescient theory discusses the prospect of an inundation of the planet, during a runaway climatic shift, causing tropical heat and oceanic expansion. His experiments chart the resulting modifications of the unconscious, as climate change triggers the shutting-down or reawakening of behaviours belonging to prior evolutionary stages of the human.

Notwithstanding the 'discredit' of Haeckel's thesis—that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, that every individual being, in its development, reiterates the stages of evolution of its remote ancestors—like Barker, Bodkin discerns a theoretical potency beneath the linear simplicity that allows its easy dismissal. If major evolutionary changes are the result of catastrophic shifts in the planetary environment—the onset of ice ages, changes in the atmosphere, the parting of tectonic plates, significant rises in temperature—then the biological can be understood, in geotraumatic terms, as a map of geological time.

Along these lines, the emergence of Barker's theory of 'spinal catastrophism' makes the necessary corrections and provides a model for geotraumatic diagnostic procedure:

> I was increasingly aware that all my real problems were modalities of back-pain, or phylogenetic spinal injury, which took me back to the calamitous consequences of the precambrian explosion, roughly five hundred million years ago. . . .
>
> Erect posture and perpendicularization of the skull is a frozen calamity, associated with a long list of pathological consequences, amongst which should be included most of the human psychoneuroses. . . .

> The issue here—as always—is real and effective regression. It is not a matter of representational psychology.
>
> Haeckel's . . . Recapitulation Thesis . . . is a theory compromised by its organicism, but its wholesale rejection was an overreaction. [Bodkin's] response is more productive and balanced, treating DNA as a transorganic memory-bank and the spine as a fossil record, without rigid onto-phylogenic correspondence.
>
> The mapping of spinal-levels onto neuronic time is supple, episodic, and diagonalizing. It concerns plexion between blocks of machinic transition, not strict isomorphic—or stratic redundancy—between scales of chronological order. Mammal DNA contains latent fish-code (amongst many other things).[6]

On the basis of this 'diagonal' model, Bodkin's experimental studies record the effectuation of archaeopsychic 'regressions' in his subjects through extreme environmental triggers, noting the extramental, trans-individual vector of such regression:

> What am I suggesting? That *Homo sapiens* is about to transform himself into Cro-Magnon and Java Man, and ultimately into *Sinanthropus*? No, a biological process is not completely reversible.
>
> The increased temperature and radiation are indeed alerting *innate releasing mechanisms. But not in our minds*. These are the oldest memories on Earth, the time-codes carried in every chromosome and gene. Eve-

[6] Barker, "Barker Speaks," 500-1.

ry step we've taken in our evolution is a milestone inscribed with organic memories—from the enzymes controlling the carcarbon dioxide cycle to the organisation of the brachial plexus and the nerve pathways of the Pyramid cells in the mid-brain, each is a record of a thousand decisions taken in the face of a sudden physico-chemical crisis. Just as psychoanalysis reconstructs the original traumatic situation in order to release the repressed material, so our subjects are being plunged back into the archaeopsychic past, uncovering the ancient taboos and drives that havebeen dormant for epochs. The brief span of an individual life is misleading. Each one of us is as old as the entire biological kingdom, and our bloodstreams are tributaries of the great sea of its total memory. The uterine odyssey of the growing foetus recapitulates the entire evolutionary past, and its central nervous system is coded time scale, each nexus of neurones and each spinal level marking a symbolic station, a unit of neuronic time. . . .

The further down the CNS you move, from the hind-brain through the medulla into the spinal cord, the further you descend back into the neuronic past. For example, the junction between the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, between T-12 and L-1, is the great zone of transit between the gill-breathing fish and the airbreathing amphibians with their respiratory rib-cages . . .

If you like, you could call this the Psychology of Total Equivalents—let's say 'Neuronics' for short—and dismiss it as metabiological fantasy. However, I am convinced that as we move back through

> geophysical time so we re-enter the amnionic corridor and move back through spinal and archaeopsychic time, recollecting in our unconscious minds the landscapes of each epoch, each with a distinct geological terrain, its own unique flora and fauna, as recognisable to anyone else as they would be to a traveller in a Wellsian time machine. Except that this is no scenic railway, but a total re-orientation of the personality. If we let these buried phantoms master us as they re-appear we'll be swept back helplessly in the flood-tide like pieces of flotsam.[7]

If infantilism were all the past had to offer, then psychoanalysis would be time-travel, and the future would be well-balanced. Announcing themselves as hyper-Freudianism, Neuronics and the Cosmic theory of Geotrauma shift from the imaginary familial circuit to the lagoons of deep time. They introduce diagonalised matter-memory in order to study the twisted indexing of the Geo-Archaeo-Psychic.

As to Land, perhaps what he found most valuable in Barker's work was the extension of geotraumatic theory into human culture and to language in particular, via this keying of the geotraumatic body-map to environmental stimuli; and the potential for development of modes of decoding of cultural phenomena that escape the signifier. Bipedalism, erect posture, forward-facing vision, the cranial verticalization of the human face, the laryngeal constriction of the voice, are themselves all indices of a succession of geotraumatic catastrophes separating the material potencies of the body from its stratified actuality. Just as the bipedal head impedes 'vertebro-perceptual linearity', the human larynx inhibits 'virtual speech'. One cannot

[7] Dr. Bodkin's Journal.

dismantle the face without also evacuating the voice. Perhaps inspired by Parsani's invocation of the Middle-Eastern vowel-less battle-cry against solar empire, Land affirms that, in geotraumatic terms, the human voice itself is—via the various accidents of hominid evolution—the enfeebled expression of geotrauma:

> Due to erect posture the head has been twisted around, shattering vertebro-perceptual linearity and setting up the phylogenetic preconditions for the face. This right-angled pneumatic-oral arrangement produces the vocal apparatus as a crash-site, in which thoracic impulses collide with the roof of the mouth. The bipedal head becomes a virtual speech-impediment, a sub-cranial pneumatic pile-up, discharged as linguo-gestural development and cephalization take-off. Burroughs suggests that the protohuman ape was dragged through its body to expire upon its tongue. It's a twin-axial system, howls and clicks, reciprocally articulated as a vowel-consonant phonetic palette, rigidly intersegmented to repress staccato-hiss continuous variation and its attendant becomings-animal. The anthropostructural head-smash that establishes our identity with logos . . . [8]

For Land, therefore, as for Bodkin, the schizoanalytic 'treatment' of geotrauma, the discovery of the 'innate releasing mechanisms', is a matter of 'real and effective regression', which can only be carried out on an experimental and empirical basis, on the basis of a certain hypothesis concerning the relation between time, matter and trauma.

[8] Barker, "Barker Speaks," 502.

A noteworthy outcome of this hypothesis is a certain deepening of pessimism: Ultimately, nothing short of the complete liquidation of biological order and the dissolution of physical structure can suffice to discharge the aboriginal trauma that mars terrestrial existence. A collective becoming-snake of human civilization would be only the first step.

When, in the 1990s, the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit—probably, it is thought, through the agency of the aged Anatole Alasca, once assistant to Professor Challenger—disinterred the by then all-but-hermetic Daniel Barker from his lab at MVU for that last CCRU interview, Nick Land embarked upon his short-lived revival of the Geocosmic Theory of Trauma through a series of experiments in microcultural destratification, documentation of which has recently been rediscovered.

Land was a relay, keeping the signal alive, but of course he didn't last long, he burnt out just like Barker before him. In 99-2000 Parsani joined us, but he was too far gone to be of any help. That's why the Committee needed a new candidate.

So where is 'Negarestani' supposed to go with this?

He begins by elaborating on the story so far: the conspiracy to return Cthelll, the earth's core, repressed runt sibling of the sun, to immanence with its solar mothership; the plotting of the return of the Tellurian insider; and the agency of oil as tellurian lube. All this we know and approve of.

But what is important is this: Ultimately, a theory that locates the source of the ills of the human psyche in the accretion of the earth 4.5 billion years ago is—obviously—far too parochial for the purposes of the Committee. It owes its local inhibitions to Land's fondness for Bataille and his disproportionate attention to Freud's later, flawed model of trauma in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

According to Bataille's 'solar economy', the most basic economic problem is not scarcity but the exorbitant excess of solar energy; all movements on this planet, from the basest physical processes through to the highest sophistications of life and culture, consist only in labyrinthine detours of one and the same vector—the profligate expenditure of energy by the sun. The secret of all apparently stable and economically conservative being is that it is already pledged to solar abolition, it already belongs to the sun and its radical horizon of death.

Negarestani recognizes the just alignment of Bataille's notion of the Solar Economy with Freud's speculative thesis concerning the nature of organic life: According to 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', the preservation of a lifeform in relation to the excessive energy source it draws upon, demands the sacrifice of a part of that lifeform: the creation of a mortified outer surface or crust—'a special envelope or membrane resistant to stimuli'—that protects it from its exorbitant source of energy. Thus, the survival and individuality of an organic lifeform, biological, psychic or cultural, is based on the repression of an originary trauma in which it encountered, in all its naked power, the source of energy that would also be its death. Lifeforms are lagoons, repressed pockets of forgetting, temporarily protecting themselves against the outside that created them and will destroy them.

Thus we can say that all forms of life are solutions to the same problem; managing the excoriating excess of solar energy which will eventually consume them in death. As modes of life become more complex and more numerous, their dependence upon the excessive power source only grows stronger; as Negarestani argues, there is a mutually-reinforcing symmetry between the plurality of life and the monism of death. Another way to put this is that, from the point of view of the securitised individuated lifeform

closed up against its traumatic encounter with solar excess, the sun inevitably becomes the single and absolute horizon or vanishing point for all life.

This development of what Negarestani will call the 'monogamous model' of the relation between terrestrial life and the sun, is relayed in the cultural and economic forms of capitalism. Capitalism appears as a crazed thanatropic machine, unlocking the earth's resources—in particular, the fossil fuels that were, in more optimistic times, referred to as 'buried sunlight'—to release them to their destiny of dissolution, and thus accelerating the consumption of the earth by the sun.

> by tapping the Carboniferous Formation and spewing it up into the sky, we've become a volcano that hasn't stopped erupting since the 1700s.[9]

Mankind is the first lifeform to contemporaneously communicate with geological time; a gigantic volcano, a holocaust of consumption, a fault in the file-system. Yet this unbridled consumption also manifests itself culturally in an ever-increasing complexification and elaboration of multiple 'ways of life' and supposedly infinite possibilities and differentiation.

To break thought out of its capture by the monogamous model, even though the propaganda of the solar empire runs through the entirety of biological life and human culture—*including the flawed variants of geotrauma theory*. This is Negarestani's first mission—To broaden still further the theory in rescinding the status of the sun as sole 'image of exteriority', as ultimate singular horizon for all life. The sun is not the absolute or the abyss, but only a local blockage, a re-

[9] Alan Weisman, *The World Without Us* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2007), 40.

striction, a blind spot that obscures the opening of the earth onto a more general cosmic economy which produced it and which will consume it, along with the sun.

In 3.5 billion years, the core of the aging sun grows hotter, causing a severe greenhouse effect that sterilises the entire biosphere; its outer surface cools, expanding to engulf the inner planets. In 7 billion years, the earth slips out of orbit but, outside the small chance that it could be flung out into the 'icy desolation of deep space', is dragged into the core of the Sun to be evaporated, its only legacy a small amount of fuel for the red giant's farewell glow. The sun becomes a 'small block of hydrogen ice'; 100 trillion years into the future, all the stars go out, followed by an era populated only by the 'degenerate remnants' that survive the end of stellar evolution. $10^{40}$ years, the cosmic catastrophe of proton decay ushers in the era of black holes, where the only stellar objects left are black holes 'convert their mass into radiation and evaporate at a glacial pace', and then the scarcely-conceivable 'dark era' populated by atomic waste products entering into desultory, increasingly rare and fruitless chance encounters.[10]

The cosmic abyss is deeper than the solar furnace. Earth's monogamous relationship with the sun is just one chapter in a weird epic narrative that does not find its climax in annihilatory conflagration.

And therefore, the terrestrial plots that play out in the human psyche must be traced back beyond the paltry 4.5 million year lifespan of the planet. The trauma is deeper still, and more weird, than Challenger, Barker or Land had imagined.

[10] See F. C. Adams, "Long-term astrophysical processes," in *Global Catastrophic Risks*, eds. N. Bostrom and M. M. Cirkovic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

To contemplate these icy, inevitable vistas of cosmic time is in a certain sense already to go beyond geotrauma. The viewpoint of an ecology radical enough to take in these extra-solar eschatologies not only breaks through terrestrial concerns, but also through the 'solar horizon' that has governed our thought on and of the earth.

As Negarestani will say, 'to be truly terrestrial is not the same as being superficial'. To be truly terrestrial is to embrace the perishability of the earth, and its implication in the universe, beyond the local economics of the relation between the sun and the surface; to replace the monogamous relation between a contingent earth and the necessary and absolute sun around which its planetary path winds, with a relation of multiplicity between this planetary body and the cosmic contingencies which led to its formation, a cosmic chemical conspiracy that works through the earth, and which finds its dissolute destiny beyond the sun. Chemophilosophy; geotrauma unearthed.

*
* *

So now you know. It was all a twisted plot. *For years, they thought they were making all this up. But the Committee was telling them what to write . . .*

The 'Speculative Realist' racket provided a perfect opportunity; capitalizing on the vogue for imagining one can subtract theoretical thought from the human imaginary, from narrative and from sense, through Negarestani we are able to inject it, precisely, with the narrative element that is, as paradoxical as it may seem, an integral part of the procedure. Signification cannot be crushed without following plots that tell ever-new stories of the earth. It's not a matter of using science or a new metaphysics to eradicate such tales, but of constructing a science of real plots, which

is what Geotrauma—in Negarestani's hands—becomes. The compulsive-repetitive symptoms that are human culture cannot be overcome simply by precipitately stripping them down to a reductive physical, metaphysical or relational states. The instigation of a collective schizoanalysis must proceed through the development of the experimental means for 'real, effective regression', for meticulous decryption.

> it is quite hopeless to try to penetrate directly to the nucleus of the pathogenic organization. . . . We ourselves undertake the opening up of inner strata, advancing radially, whereas the patient looks after the peripheral extension of the work.
>
> We must get hold of a piece of the logical thread, by whose guidance alone we may hope to penetrate to the interior.[11]

*Unpick the individual, travel down her spine, into the rocks, through the iron core, attaining a burning immanence with the sun, and exiting towards the unknown.*

Above all, Negarestani's 'universalist' reconstruction of the theory of trauma, and his continual rethinking of 'The Insider' in yet more xeno-economical terms, must be understood in the wake of the committee's recent reappropriation of Ferenczi's work for the cause. For Ferenczi, trauma is not a hole punched into the organic by exteriority. This model would only reflect—all too-closely—*the empirical occasioning cause of the theoretical recognition of trauma*. Nor is it, even (as in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) a founding event synonymous with the constitution of the organic individual per se, and which

[11] Freud, *Psychotherapy of Hysteria*.

constricts its path to death. Trauma is a perennial *boring* or a vermicular inhabiting of the organic by the inorganic:

> the inassimilable presence of the universal continuum within the regional field, a resident yet alienating presence that has been bored and nested into the horizon from different angles, contingently, gradationally, infinitesimally. We call this resident yet inassimilable index of exteriority that can neither be expelled nor reintegrated within the interiorized horizon, the Insider.[12]

Ferenczi's traumata are plotholes that must be plumbed, outward itineraries that must be travelled. The time of trauma is altered. Geophilosophy was always a chemophilosophy: just as it needed to explode the constricted space of the individual and escape to the political surface of the earth, and just as it was then necessary to understand the apparently stable surface as an arrested flow and to penetrate to the depths, the cosmic theory of geotrauma now needed to pass through the core of the earth only to escape its inhibited mode of traumatic stratification and to carry its interrogation further afield, or rather according to a new mode of distribution.

The Committee's question is: which practices, conspiracies, theories, insurgencies, *setting out from the local surface,* will 'assist the earth in hatching its inner black egg'; which plots will assist in decrypting the addresses of traumatic agents no longer understood as foreign bodies that assault the protective

[12] Reza Negarestani, *On the Revolutionary Earth* (unpublished); subsequently published as "Globe of Revolution. An Afterthought on Geophilosophical Realism," *Identities* 17 (2011): 25-54.

membrane of the organic individual, nor even as a repressed fragments of a greater exuberance; but as xeno-chemical insiders, Old Ones waiting to be awakened. What stimuli will key into the triggers that will attach us to a Kurtz-gradient, disintricating the tangled themes that surface as reality-symptoms, allowing us egress into dreams where the lagoon of personal memory drains into a sea of cosmic trauma?

> Guided by his dreams, he was moving backwards through the emergent past, through a succession of ever stranger landscapes, centred upon the lagoon, each of which seemed to represent one of his own spinal levels. At times the circle of water was spectral and vibrant, at others slack and murky, the shore apparently formed of shale, like the dull metallic skin of a reptile. Yet again the soft beaches would glow invitingly with a glossy carmine sheen, the sky warm and limpid, the emptiness of the long stretches of sand total and absolute, filling him with an exquisite and tender anguish.
>
> He longed for this descent through archaeopsychic time to reach its conclusion, repressing the knowledge that when it did the external world around him would have become alien and unbearable.[13]

> How can the revolutionary subject, through deepening and widening its traumas, attain topological and categorical equivalence with the universal absolute? Likewise, how can the regional horizon—as a relatively open set excised from the universal absolute—find its equivalence with the absolute through deep-

[13] Dr. Bodkin's Journal.

> ening its geophilosophical synthesis and stretching its nested traumas by dilating and twisting them?[14]

It's a question of writing, but also of mapping. That's where Cane comes in. Once you see the Atlas you'll know where to go.

The Plutonics Committee had to exert some pressure, to get things moving.

> There is nothing for it but to keep at first to the periphery of the psychical structure. We begin by getting the patient to tell us what he knows and remembers, while we are at the same time already directing his attention and overcoming his slighter resistances by the use of the pressure procedure. Whenever we have opened a new path by thus pressing on his forehead, we may expect him to advance some distance without fresh resistance.
>
> After we have worked in this way for some time, the patient begins as a rule to co-operate with us.[15]

It therefore remains for us to see how, effectively, simultaneously, these various tasks of schizoanalysis proceed.

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* *

[14] Negarestani, *On the Revolutionary Earth*.
[15] Freud, *The Psychotherapy of Hysteria*.

*It was over. Only later would all of this take on concrete meaning. The double-articulated mask had come undone, and so had the gloves and tunic, from which liquids escaped. Disarticulated, deterriorialized, Negarestani muttered that he was taking the earth with him.*